# Tularemia *(Francisella tularensis)*

**Revision 10/28/02**

**Missouri Dept of Health and Senior Services (800) 392-0272 (24 hours)**

**State Public Health Laboratory (573) 751-3334 or 751-0633**

**Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.**

## Specimen Collection and Transport

### Clinical:

Tissue samples from humans (or animals) must be submitted frozen (-30 to -70°C.) Best samples for testing include liver, spleen, lungs or lymph node. If pneumonic tularemia is suspected, collect a sputum or bronchial/tracheal wash. They can be placed into any sterile container that seals well. Blood can also be cultured, but is seldom positive.

### Reference cultures:

The MSPHL can also confirm or identify any organism isolated from another laboratory, which is suspected of being *F. tularensis*. Reference cultures should be submitted on an enriched chocolate slant.

### Environmental samples:

At this time environmental sampling, if performed, would be situation specific. No standardized testing procedures are available. Consult the MSPHL.

### Testing available:

Culture, isolate identification, DFA and rapid antigen detection by TRF.

### Reporting:

**All reporting times are the minimum time. Any individual specimen could take longer.**

*F. tularensis* is a very slow-growing organism. Primary isolation from a clinical specimen may take 3-5 days. The MSPHL can perform an FA and TRF directly on tissue specimens. This could be completed within 2-3 hours after receipt of the specimen in the lab. Confirmation of a suspect organism isolated at another laboratory by direct FA and TRF can be completed within 1-2 hours of receipt in the MSPHL.